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ART MATTERS.

Strolling down Broadway some few days since, and being in the vicinity of Astor place, my visual organs were startled by the sight of a small white building, on which was painted in letters of about a foot high, "THOMAS HICKS' STUDIO." Awe-stricken, I stood and gazed upon the imposing spectacle. Surely none but a master mind could have hit upon such a brilliant expedient to attain popularity, thought I, other painters are content with modest cards, upon their studio doors, but lo! the stupendous greatness of Mr. Hicks!

It would be madness to speculate upon the amount of black and white paint expended upon this sign, suffice it to say the letters are painted with great neatness and regularity while the effect of light and shade is truly admirable, calling forth from the beholder unbounded and unlimited praise. The feeling of height and space is also wonderfully impressive and reminds one strongly of some of those masterpieces of sign painting which we meet with so often on the fronts of the mercantile palaces of Broadway.

Words, however, are inadequate to fully describe the many beauties of this really great work of art.

Entering the studio of Mr. Hicks that gentleman may be discovered hard at work on one of those portraits which have rendered his name immortal. Mr. Hicks' manner may possibly strike you as being somewhat brusque, in fact rude,—but surely a man who is the owner of such a sign may be allowed to look down on the less elevated members of society, and his eccentricities should be regarded merely as evidences of that exalted genius which characterizes himself and sign.

But let us drop *badinage* and come to business. Mr. Hicks has just finished an excellent portrait of one of our most distinguished lawyers which is good in color and execution, strong in expression, but somewhat stiff in drawing, a fault which is to be found in many of this artist's works, the accessories are well painted and give a great feeling of *vérité* to the picture. The head of the distinguished gentleman is expressive of great power and energy, and these characteristics Mr. Hicks has caught and placed upon the canvas with consummate skill, giving us a portrait which is admirable in almost every particular.

Leutze, who has happily recovered from his late severe illness, is at work on a fine semi-allegorical picture of Oliver Cromwell which promises to be one of his best efforts. Cromwell is seated by the side of a chest, from which he is drawing the Magna Charta, while with contemptuous action he brushes aside the crown, sceptre, globe, and other insignia of royalty beneath which the great document has so long been buried. On his right is lying the old white banner of England, while further on we see the back of the canvas on which is scrawled the name of Charles I.

Mr. Leutze has succeeded admirably in the figure of the sturdy reformer; the whole action and expression fully convey the idea intended, the dilating nostril, the scornful smile upon the lip, the angry, impatient gesture of drawing forth

the Magna Charta are all excellent; added to this, the drapery is painted with great care and elaboration of detail, while throughout the whole picture runs a rich, quiet key of color which is in every way delightful.

Bellows is at work on one of his exquisite landscapes, which he calls "In the Country." A merry party of city beaux and belles have quitted the mushroom town and are disporting themselves among the waving trees and green fields of the country.

"With sportive minds they coursed about,
And shouted as they ran,"

their bright dresses contrasting happily with the half sombre color of the shady nook in which we find them, while through the trees bursts a gleam of sunshine which plays with tenderness upon the flowing hair of the joyous maidens.

Mr. Bellows is always successful in his treatment of pictures of this character, and the work in question is not one whit behind any of his former efforts. The cool, limpid waters of the brook sparkle again under his facile brush, while sky, field and forest are brought before the eye in glowing colors. One particularly fine passage in the picture is the effect of sunlight breaking through the trees in the middle distance; here we have a piece of soft, rich color which has seldom been surpassed, and toward which the eye wanders again and again, attracted by its delicacy and beauty.

De Haas has completed his large picture of "The Passage of the Forts Below New Orleans," and it is now on exhibition at the Studio Building in Tenth Street. Mr. De Haas' success in this, his last work, is decided; he seems to have caught the whole spirit of the subject represented and gives us a startlingly realistic picture. One particularly fine point is the glow which is seen on the smoke, in the distance, caused by the fire from the forts and ships. The strong effect of light and shade throughout is also excellent. There is but one serious fault to be found in the whole picture, and that is in the water; here Mr. De Haas, has been but moderately successful, as there is a great lack of transparency and motion, and in their place an opaque, painty feeling, which is quite unpleasant. Aside from this, the picture is a great one, and as the artist has had the advice of Admiral Farragut, as to the position of ships, &c., it must undoubtedly be a correct representation of the stirring scene which proved of such great importance to the success of the Federal arms during the late unhappy rebellion.

Martin is at work on a large picture of Keene Valley, Adirondacks, which, although in a very unfinished condition, promises well. The broad, peaceful valley stretches down the middle of the picture, girt in by lofty mountains, while towering over all is Tahawus, the grandest peak of the Adirondack range of mountains.

Whittredge has just finished a charming little landscape which he calls "Shawangunk Lake," tender in color and quiet and harmonious in effect. In addition to the above mentioned picture, Mr. Whittredge has just finished a bright, breezy sketch of Newport which is simply exquisite.

J. B. Irving is at work on another of his carefully painted *genre* pictures, entitled the "Wed-

ding Ring," which is noticeable for the excellence of its drapery painting; further than this it is impossible to judge at present, as the picture is but just begun.

LaFarge has on his easel some strongly painted flowers; rich and luminous in color and bold in execution and design. In addition to these the gentleman has just finished the sketch for a large picture of Tennyson's "Lady of Shalott," which is full of poetic feeling and sentiment.

Le Clear has just finished a fine portrait of Edwin Booth; good in color and fully developing and individualizing the characteristics of the man.

Wust is at work on another of those large pictures of Norwegian scenery for which he is becoming so justly celebrated. In this case it is a swollen mountain torrent which rushes and roars along on its mad career, dashing against rocks and seething and surging in its impotent fury. The subject is a wonderfully impressive one, and Mr. Wust has done it full justice; painting it, as it were, *con amore*, and giving us a really grand and imposing picture.

In addition, and in strong contrast, to the above, Mr. Wust has just finished a quiet little landscape of American scenery: a secluded nook in the Catskill woods, where the sun struggles through the leafy roof, sparkling and glistening on the babbling brook which runs adown the middle of the picture.

Constant Mayer has taken up his quarters in the Somerville Building, 82 Fifth Avenue, where he is hard at work putting the finishing touches on his large picture, "Convalescence." The gentleman has just finished an exceedingly clever *genre* picture, which he calls "The Itinerants;" two little Italian musicians, which, by the way, are both portraits, fiddling and harping their way through the streets. It is a quaint, quiet little picture, full of subtle beauty and humor.

In addition to these, Mr. Mayer is at work on a very clever portrait of himself, which is good in color and execution, in addition to being an excellent likeness.

A. Lumley has in his studio a remarkably characteristic drawing of an old Chelsea pensioner, which is exceedingly strong in character and expression, giving us a life-like portrait of the scarred and sturdy veteran.

Rothermel gave a private view of his historical picture of "The Republican Court in the days of Lincoln," on Wednesday evening. The picture is to be on exhibition for some time at the Derby Gallery, 625 Broadway. I hope to notice it, at length, next week.

PALETTE.

MUSICAL GOSSIP.

It would appear from correspondence to Parisian journals that Wachtel, the celebrated robust tenor, really quits Berlin, and that he will, after making a tour in German cities, visit Paris during its grand exhibition, thereafter trying his professional fortune in this country. No allusion is made by these correspondents to his engagement for three years, previously stated with extraordinary circumstance, or whether that engagement really existed or had been cancelled by mutual consent of the management and himself.

The advent of Niemann undoubtedly interfered with that full sway over Berlin's operatic public

which before his coming from Hanover, undoubtedly appertained to Wachtel's strong high tenor. First tenor roles were fairly distributed between those rivals, but neither could probably endure a divided sway at the Royal Opera House.

By recent notices from thence, we observe that Lucca, Artot, Wipern and Woworki share between them principal female roles in like equal fashion with the arrangements to work two first-class tenors in one company.

At the Italian opera—Berlin—"Don Pasquale," and "Il Trovatore" had given Sarolta and Grossi good opportunity for public estimation. In the Gypsy role the latter is said to have made a new and deserved success.

At the sixth "Euterpe" concert in Leipzig, the overture to "Oberon" is said to have been perfectly given, and Mme. Johnson-Graever's debut was a great success.

Count Platen, recently Intendant of Hanover's Theatre royal, succeeds Koenneritz as Intendant of Saxony's Theatre Royal, by royal edict therefor.

Louis II. presented recently to Mme. Sophie Dietz in recognition of her long and faithful service at Bavaria's Court Theatre, a bracelet ornamented with brilliants.

Holstein has written the book and music for a new three-act opera, upon a popular legend.

Merelli's opera company is reported as flourishing at Warsaw, and Trebelli's *eclat* in "La Favorita" and "Il Trovatore" as remarkable.

A young pianist from Vienna, named Mlle. Skiwa has made a furore in Belgium. She plays, among other wonders, Hiller's concerto.

At Madrid's Royal they gave recently, six different operas in one week, viz.: "Poliuto," "Un Ballo in Maschera," "La Favorita," "I Vespri Siciliani," and "Roberto il Diavolo," working hard to make variety charming.

At Barcelona's Liceo they had recently a grand performance of "Les Huguenots," in which Mme. Pascal-Damiani, Morensi, Espinach, Stagno, Boccolini, Vialletti and Pettit were the principals. The director of that opera has succeeded for some unknown cause.

The director of Prague's "Wirsing" Theatre announces, for performance there, an unknown operetta by Gluck, which is called "L'Arbre enchante." It was performed once at Versailles by the king's private company in 1775, but never since.

Langert's opera runs a successful round of German opera houses, and Chorley speaks of it most favorably, his judgment being founded upon its score, with expressed hope that London will speedily witness its performance. He condemns Duvivier's new opera at Le Lyrique decidedly, and declares that Parisian opinion condemned it also.

Wachtel is reported as making a sensation at Dresden during a recess from duty at Berlin; as Vasco di Gama.

Mirate, the celebrated Neapolitan tenor, met with a ludicrous accident last month at Palermo's opera. He was announced for "Otello," but a change from that opera to "Rigoletto" was made just before the opera should commence because some other principal was taken ill, and Mirate not being apprised of the sudden change, appeared in the house too late for changing his costume and figment. He was therefore compelled to perform *Il Duca di Modena*, during the first act, presenting the Moor of Venice to a giggling and roaring audience which enjoyed the joke vastly.

Madrid correspondence to Parisian journals enthusiastically praises Sonneri's performance of Isabella's role, and declares Penco, Naudin, Selva and Palmeri to have been admirable in their endeavors to make a grand representation of "Roberto il Diavolo" at the Orient.

Adelina Patti is highly praised by *Le Menestrel* for her performance of Elvira's role—"I Puritani"—at Les Italiens, and especially for the finale of act first.

L'Academie—Paris—direction pay for Mlle. Bettelheim the 12,000 florins which she forfeits by

not fulfilling her three years' engagement at Vienna, and give her 80,000 francs per annum with three months' *conge*. Parisians desire her performance of Eboli's role in "Don Carlos," which opera had not by last advices yet attained its first rehearsal with orchestra. as Mme. Saas and Faure could not attend when all was ready for that full trial of a new work, because of illness.

February 15th was last fixed upon as the all important epoch for Verdi's grand opera to appear in public.

Le Lyrique had trouble also because of "indisposition," as "Der Freischutz" being postponed to accommodate Michot's health, Monjaune refused to appear in "Martha" which had been substituted for it, at the last moment, and Carvalho sued him for consequent damage.

Rossini's last *soiree musicale* is said to have surpassed all precedent in the wealth of its programme. He accompanied Alboni then while singing a new "Salutaris" written by him, which is highly commended by those present. Diemer played on the pianoforte "La Danse Tartare," Delle-Sedie gave a romance from "Don Pasquale," George Matthias gave his "Rouet enchante" on a magnificent Erard, Braga made the violoncello effective in a droll fantasie, and the great sensation of that reunion was made by Armand Barne, an excellent baritone, with Rossini's piano accompaniment in singing most enthusiastically "Le Lazzarone," words by Emillien Pacini, music by Rossini. That excited a furore and imperative *bis*.

Clara and Georges Pfeiffer were successful at Paris in a *matinee musicale*, assisted by Lebourg and Sarasate.

Mlle. Nilsson recently excited Lille's "Cercle du Nord" to furious applause by her brilliant vocalization.

The second ball at Les Italiens resulted in praise for its attendance, with augury of aid to its manager.

Wilhelmj conquered Parisian critics by his first performance at L'Athenee. They style him Joachim's rival.

Carlotta Patti is said to need rest after her concert tour and proposes to seek it in Nice.

Fehchen David reconsidered his purposed visit to Milan when he learned that La Scala had closed.

Charles and Theodore Formes are reported by Parisian journals intent upon founding a German opera in New York, but waiting that consummation, the former amuses Hamburg dilettanti with stories about his travels in America.

Naudin denies that Spain's Queen had decorated him with the Order of Isabella.

The failure of Bazzini's opera, "Turanda," at La Scala, is attributed to its weak plot and poor libretto, as Italians now regard more than of yore the foundation and narration of an opera. He is conceded to be a composer of real talent, but inspiration could not be imparted to music treating of so tame a book as that which he attempted to work up for "Turanda."

Corunna's grand theatre was recently destroyed by fire, but no particulars are given respecting the accident by the journals which curtly state a fact so common as burning a theatre.

In a reunion held by Rubini, a well accredited singing master at Paris, there appeared several artists, including Sivori and Mlle. Nilsson. He executed splendidly a romance of Beethoven, and she gave that assemblage Swedish melodies in taking style.

The Richings Opera company are represented as successful at Philadelphia in their routine performances.

A Chicago journal says the recent Opera season there was a comparative failure, and the performances were very uneven, some of them being *fiascos*, adding, "An opera troupe must be very nearly perfect to succeed in Chicago." That journal also remarks upon the Philharmonic Society's concerts there unfavorably and declares that its days are numbered. The last concert is described "as a musical and financial failure."

ACADEMY OF MUSIC.

DIRECTOR.....MAX MARETZKE.

OPENING OF THE ITALIAN OPERA SEASON, Thursday, March 7, 1867.

The Director has the honor to announce the commencement, on the above date, of an ITALIAN OPERA SEASON OF THIRTY NIGHTS, at the New Academy of Music.

In asking attention to the unusually brilliant features of this Season's Programme, the Director takes special pleasure in stating that, in addition to the unusually large number of Prime Donne comprised in the regular Company, each of whom has already gained the approbation of the New York public, he has effected arrangements for the appearance in Grand Opera of the eminent and popular artiste,

MADAME E. PAREPA,

who will be presented in NORMA, DONNA ANNA ("Don Giovanni") and several other of her great characters.

The Troupe, which is in fact almost A TRIPLE COMPANY, includes the following distinguished names:

PRIME DONNE.

CLARA LOUISE KELLOGG,

CARMEN POCH, FANNIE NATALIA TESTA,

AMALIA M. HAUCH,

ANTOINETTA RONCONI, STELLA BONHEUR,

EUPHROSINE PAREPA.

Encouraged by the very gratifying success that has in so many instances followed his earnest efforts to develop American talent, the Director will again accord the opportunity of debut to one or two aspirants for the first honors of the lyric stage.

TENOR.

E. MAZZOLENI,

R. BARAGLI,

E. TEST,

H. BEFNARDI.

PRIMO BUFFO.

GIORGIO RONCONI.

BARTONI.

F. BELLINI.

BASS.

G. ANTONUCCI,

A. BACCCELLI,

L. FOSSATI,

(his first appearance.)

The ORCHESTRA, which has been selected from the very best talent, will be directed by Mr. BERGMANN, Signor TORRIANI and MAX MARETZKE.

Among other virtuosi now secured to this establishment is

SIGNOR ALBANO, HARPISIT,

who has been expressly engaged from Europe.

THE CHORUS AND CORPS DE BALLET

have also been thoroughly reorganized, strengthened and improved. Each of these important auxiliary forces is in charge of an experienced master.

The various Operas will be produced in most attractive style, the wardrobe of the Company having been completely renewed this year at large expense, and entirely new sets of scenery having been expressly painted for the Academy by Messrs. Calyo, Isherwood, Hayes, Marston and Lewis.

THE REPERTOIRE

For this season comprises the following works:

L'Africaine,

L'Etoile du Nord,

Norma,

La Sonnambula.

Trovatore,

Ernani,

Rigoletto,

Un Ballo in Maschera,

Faust,

Fra Diavola,

Il Barbiere di Seviglia,

La Traviata,

Zampa,

Crispino e la Comare,

Lucrezia Borgia,

Don Pasquale,

La Favorita,

L'Elisir d'Amore.

Martha,

Irene,

Don Giovanni.

In addition to which Petrello's new Comic Opera,

IL CARNIVALE DI VENIZIA,

will be produced for the first time, with a cast embracing nearly all the favorites of the Company.

SUBSCRIPTION.

Former subscribers and others intending to patronize the opera can secure boxes and choice seats, for the season of 30 nights, upon application at the Box Office of the New Academy of Music on and after to-day, where all desired information will be given.

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS.

Subscribers for the whole series of 30 nights will receive complimentary tickets (one for each subscription) to the

GRAND INAUGURAL BAL D'OPERA, ON FRIDAY, MARCH 1.

PRICES OF ADMISSION WILL BE AS FOLLOWS:

General admission, \$1.50; Secured Seats in Parquet or Balcony, according to location, Extra from Fifty Cents to One Dollar. Family Circle, 75 cents. Private Boxes, according to size and location, \$9 to \$20.